

Vermont

Adoption Assistance- Who Do You Contact?

State Contact information

<p style="text-align: center;">Adoption Assistance Specialist</p> <p>NAME: Diane Dexter</p> <p>ADDRESS: Agency of Human Services Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services Division of Social Services 103 S. Main Street Waterbury, Vermont 05671</p> <p>E-MAIL: ddexter@srs.state.vt.us</p> <p>TELEPHONE: 802.241.2131</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ICAMA Compact Administrator Or Contact</p> <p>NAME: Margo Bryce</p> <p>ADDRESS: Agency of Human Services Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services Division of Social Services 103 S. Main Street Waterbury, Vermont 05671</p> <p>E-MAIL: mbryce@srs.state.vt.us</p> <p>TELEPHONE: 802.241.2131</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Adoption Program Manager Or Contact</p> <p>NAME: Diane Dexter</p> <p>ADDRESS: Agency of Human Services Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services Division of Social Services 103 S. Main Street Waterbury, Vermont 05671</p> <p>E-MAIL: ddexter@srs.state.vt.us</p> <p>TELEPHONE: 802.241.2131</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ICPC Compact Administrator Or Contact</p> <p>NAME: Margo Bryce</p> <p>ADDRESS: Agency of Human Services Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services Division of Social Services 103 S. Main Street Waterbury, Vermont 05671</p> <p>E-MAIL: mbryce@srs.state.vt.us</p> <p>TELEPHONE: 802.241.2131</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Post Adoption Services Contact</p> <p>NAME: Diane Dexter</p> <p>ADDRESS: Agency of Human Services Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services Division of Social Services 103 S. Main Street Waterbury, Vermont 05671</p> <p>E-MAIL: ddexter@srs.state.vt.us</p> <p>TELEPHONE: 802.241.2131</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Medical Assistance Specialist</p> <p>NAME: Margo Bryce</p> <p>ADDRESS: Agency of Human Services Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services Division of Social Services 103 S. Main Street Waterbury, Vermont 05671</p> <p>E-MAIL: mbryce@srs.state.vt.us</p> <p>TELEPHONE: 802.241.2131</p>

Adoption Assistance- Who is Eligible?

A good place to start. Public adoption in Vermont is administered by the Agency of Human Services (AHS), Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS) through the Lund Family Center's *Project Family*. AHS, SRS and adoption links: www.ahs.state.vt.us/, www.state.vt.us/srs/index.htm, and www.state.vt.us/srs/adoption/index.html

- 1. What specific factors or conditions does your state consider to determine that a child cannot be placed with adoptive parents without providing financial assistance? ("What is your state definition of special needs?")**

A child with special needs is defined as a child that has at least one of the following needs or circumstances that may be a barrier to placement or adoption without financial assistance:

- Four years of age or older
- Race or ethnic background and three years of age or older
- Member of a sibling group of two or more children being adopted by the same family
- Medical condition/disability
- Physical, mental, emotional or psychological disability

- 2. What are the eligibility criteria for your state-funded adoption assistance program?**

In order to be eligible for state-funded adoption assistance a child must be a special needs child as defined above and in the care and custody of the state of Vermont.

- 3. What is the maximum amount a family may receive in non-recurring adoption expenses from your state? Adoptive parents can receive reimbursement of certain approved, "one-time" adoption expenses incurred in the process of finalizing a special needs adoption.**

\$2,000.00 per child

- 4. Does your state enter into deferred adoption assistance agreements? In some states, adoptive parents can enter into an agreement in which they choose to defer the receipt of a Medicaid card, the monthly monetary payment, or both and can elect to receive the Medicaid card and/or monetary payment at another time.**

Vermont offers deferred adoption assistance. Children must meet the special needs criteria or be at risk of developing a special need and the adoptive family must apply prior to adoption finalization. Termination of parental rights on both parents must be complete and documentation of efforts to place the child without assistance must be made by the placing agency. Eligibility determinations for deferred assistance are made on a case-by-case basis and children must meet Title IV-E/SSI eligibility criteria.

- 5. When may adoption assistance payments and benefits begin in your state?**

Adoption assistance payments and benefits may begin in Vermont at adoption placement if the child is legally free for adoption. If the child is not legally free for adoption, payments and benefits may begin at adoption finalization.

6. How are changes made to the adoption assistance agreement in your state?

- a. When can a parent request a change in the adoption assistance agreement?
- b. How does a parent request a change in the adoption assistance agreement?
- c. What if a parent does not receive the change they request in the adoption assistance agreement?

Adoptive parents can request a change in the adoption assistance agreement at any time. Whenever a significant change occurs in a child's special needs that relates to the need for which adoption assistance was granted, parents can request make a request for modification of the agreement. Requests for changes in the adoption assistance agreement, both increases and decreases in assistance, must be in writing and have the adoptive parent(s) signature(s). To make a request to increase adoption assistance, the adoptive family must first make use of any and all available community supports and substantiate the need for the increase. Parents must include information detailing the community supports and agencies the family has already contacted for assistance, the results of those contacts, any school or psychological evaluations, and information from therapists, doctors or social workers working with the child and family. The written request for change must outline what is needed, an estimate of cost, what portion (if any) of the cost will be funded by community supports, what portion (if any) will be funded by the family, and what portion parents are seeking from the state. The request must also detail the estimated duration of services/costs. Requests should be sent to the Adoption Manager. Adoption assistance agreements are reviewed every three years before the child is sixteen years of age and annually after the age of sixteen. Adoption assistance will terminate under the three following conditions: the child no longer lives in the home, the family no longer supports the child, or the family no longer has care and custody of the child.

Vermont DCF Department Contacts locator, link: www.state.vt.us/srs/contacts.htm. For information regarding adoption, contact the Central Office at the following address: 103 South Main Street, Waterbury, Vermont 05671-2401, or phone: 802.241.2131

Adoption Assistance- Post Adoption Services

7. What types of post adoption services are available in your state and how do I find out more about them?

Post adoption services in Vermont are administered by the AHS, Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS), Division of Social Services (DSS). Services are contracted through a collection of private agencies in a Post Adoption Consortium and independent and parent organizations. Post-adoption services include the following examples:

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| 1. Information and referral | 5. Respite | 9. Therapy |
| 2. Educational programs | 6. Residential treatment | 10. Advocacy |
| 3. Educational materials | 7. Therapeutic intervention | |
| 4. Support programs | 8. State Registry (mediation/search services) | |

The Parent to Parent Program connects families to services and to other families for support. The Post Adoption Consortium connects families to agencies that provide post adoption support services. See Vermont's Adoption Handbook, link: www.state.vt.us/srs/adoption/handbook2003.pdf (See Page 21, #3: *Post-Adoption Services* for a list of services and Page 22, *Vermont ADOPTION Consortium*, for a listing of service providers in your area.) Providers include:

- **Adoption Advocates:** Office: Shelburne, Phone: 802.985.8289
- **Casey Family Services:** Offices: White River Junction and Waterbury, Phone: 800.607.1400 or 802.649.1400 or 800.244.1408 or 802.244.1400

- **Easter Seals Vermont:** Office: Berlin, Phone: 802. 223.4744
- **Lund Family Center:** Office: Burlington, Phone: 802. 864.7467
- **Northeast Kingdom Human Services:** Offices: St. Johnsbury and Newport, Phone: 800.649.0118 or 802. 748.3181
- **Vermont Children's Aid Society:** Offices: Winooski, Woodstock, Bennington, Phone: 800.479.0015 or 802.655.0006

To contact your local SRS Department, see the contacts locator link: www.state.vt.us/srs/contacts.htm. To contact the Vermont Adoption Registry, link: www.state.vt.us/srs/adoption/registry.html.

Note: Not all services may be available in all cases. Contact your adoption assistance worker or post adoption services contact for information regarding process, eligibility, availability, and duration of services.

Adoption Assistance- Medical assistance

8. What mental health services are provided by your state?

Public mental health services for children in Vermont are administered by the Agency of Human Services, Department of Developmental and Mental Health Services (DDMHS) and include the following examples: Core Capacity Services-immediate crisis response; clinic-based treatment; outreach treatment; family support; prevention, screening, referral and community consultation. Statewide Capacity Services-emergency or hospital diversion beds; intensive residential service, hospital inpatient services.

Children's Mental Health Services works with designated agencies in each region to assure delivery of effective behavioral health treatment and supports as well as prevention and early intervention services through a family-centered system of care for all children and families in the state. The Child, Adolescent and Family Mental Health treatment system is organized around the five core capacity services listed above that are available within each geographic area of the state as well as several statewide capacities for intensive residential and/or psychiatric hospital placements. The services are available separately or in combination for a youth and their family, depending on their desires and needs. Child, Adolescent and Family Mental Health Services link: www.ddmhs.state.vt.us/programs/cafu/child-services.html and DMHS Programs and Services link: www.ddmhs.state.vt.us/programs/programs.html.

Information about Mental Health link:

www.ahs.state.vt.us/knowmoreabout/getprogs.cfm?searchchoice=service_type&service_type=Mental%20Health or phone 802.241.2650. See also Crisis Contact numbers, link: www.ddmhs.state.vt.us/contact/crisis-numbers.html.

Note: Not all services may be available in all cases. Contact your adoption assistance worker or medical assistance specialist for information regarding process, eligibility, availability, and duration of services.

9. Does your state provide additional finances or services for medical or therapeutic needs not covered under your state medical plan to children receiving adoption assistance?

Vermont offers what is known as *Payments for Special Services*. Funding is available for AHS to provide support for specific special services, to include the following examples: psychological care, psychiatric care, and dental and medical services. Funding is only available after adoptive parents have exhausted all resources, both public and private, including the family's private health insurance.

Note: Not all services may be available in all cases. Contact your adoption assistance worker for information regarding process, eligibility, availability, and duration of services.

Adoption Assistance- Fair Hearings

10. What is your state's process for applying for a fair hearing? A fair hearing is a legal, administrative procedure that provides a forum to address disagreements with agency decisions.

Adoptive parents can request a fair hearing any time an Agency of Human Services decision affects their child's adoption assistance benefits. Parents are sent letters informing them of intended Agency action that will affect their child's benefits and the letter provides information and contacts to appeal the decision through fair hearing heard by the Human Services Board. Families may contact the Adoption Chief, for information on Vermont's fair hearing process and procedures, phone 802.241.2142.

Adoption Assistance- Web/Internet Information

11. What is your state Web address for general adoption information?

Vermont's general adoption links: www.projectfamily.state.vt.us/challenge_how.html (See Project Family, A Challenge, under *How to Adopt*) and www.state.vt.us/srs/adoption/handbook2003.pdf (Vermont Adoption Handbook, PDF format)

12. What is your state Web address for adoption assistance information?

Vermont's adoption assistance links: www.projectfamily.state.vt.us/challenge_cost.html (See Project Family, A Challenge, under *The Cost*) and www.state.vt.us/srs/adoption/handbook2003.pdf (See Page 15, *Adopting a Waiting Child*, under *Special Needs* and "*For Example*")

13. What is your state Web address for state-specific medical assistance information for children?

Vermont's state-specific medical assistance links: www.path.state.vt.us/ and www.path.state.vt.us/Programs_Pages/Healthcare/medicaid.htm